

**Creating the 21<sup>ST</sup> Century Workforce:**

**DEVELOPING COORDINATED  
REGIONAL STRATEGIES**

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**A Michigan Works! &  
Community Action Agency**

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# CREATING THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY WORKFORCE: DEVELOPING COORDINATED REGIONAL STRATEGIES

## The Region

Washtenaw County will serve as the region for the purpose of this grant. The Ann Arbor PMSA is recognized by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Washtenaw County is home to approximately 325,000 people and is a net importer of labor. Washtenaw County Michigan Works! (MWA) and its Workforce Development Board (WDB) will serve as the project leads.

## Approach

Washtenaw County is fortunate in that it has strong partnerships in workforce, economic development, business, education and higher education that pre-date this initiative. This includes the MEGA-Partnership that is focused on talent. MEGA-Partnership members include:

Ann Arbor Area Chamber of Commerce	The University of Michigan
Ann Arbor SPARK	Ypsilanti Area Chamber of Commerce
Eastern Michigan University	Washtenaw Community College
Concordia University	Washtenaw County Workforce Development Board/ETCS/MWA
MEDC	

The MEGA-Partnership provides the leadership for the Talent focus across the region. Its goal is to provide workforce and economic development services that support the growth and prosperity of the businesses and citizens of Washtenaw County that exceed their expectations for service and quality. It does this by:

- Connecting the partners in ways that ensure alignment of services and resources.
- Connecting employers to the services of the Partners by providing information in a seamless manner; working jointly to solve employer problems and working together to provide services that attract employers and help them grow.
- Connecting entrepreneurs to services that will assist them in growing their companies in Washtenaw County.
- Connecting the residents of the community to services that help them find jobs and pursue training and education.

MEGA-Partnership members meet bi-weekly to develop joint strategies and implement joint programs and share information. A quarterly meeting of the heads of each organizations is held to ensure leadership support and alignment of resources. The MEGA-Partners are essential in the implementation of this plan.

### **Ann Arbor SPARK**

An essential partner is Ann Arbor Spark, which was formed in 2005 to provide the economic development leadership for the region. SPARK, an umbrella economic development and marketing organization, succeeded the Washtenaw Development Council and was established to improve the economic development strategies and programs in the County. SPARK is a non-profit organization with the mission of being the driving force in establishing the Ann Arbor region as a destination for business expansion, retention, and location by identifying and meeting the needs of business at every stage, from startups to large organizations. Entrepreneurial, university, business, government and community leaders banded together to form SPARK. (Appendix A of SPARK Board Members)

SPARK's goal is to double the number of technology companies and triple the number of technology jobs in the region by 2010, making the greater Ann Arbor region a hub of entrepreneurial energy and a great place to work, live and create or grow a business. SPARK is aimed at high-tech companies built on innovation. That includes biotech, information tech, small tech, energy, advanced manufacturing and security.

### **Alignment with SEMWAC**

Our focus is to align Washtenaw County regional efforts with partner MWA's in Southeast Michigan through active participation in SEMWAC. This is essential in creating a coordinated regional strategy. The County has retained M3 Strategies as a consultant to facilitate this process and will align our work with the other SEMWAC areas. The role of the facilitator will be to provide project management support and assistance in the development and execution of a communications strategy for our two-pronged approach.

## **1. Create a Uniform Approach to Working with Employers**

Helping businesses and job seekers achieve long term success will greatly improve the economic conditions and fiscal stability for the County. The MEGA-Partners work together to find and eliminate duplication of effort as well as to create new services for firms. The partners understand that success depends on elimination of parochial (self interest) barriers among County agencies and community partners.

### **Key Partners**

MEGA-Partners

### **Strategies/Activities**

- Developed a matrix of services
- Cross-trained staff
- Added Ann Arbor SPARK to the WDB
- Meet bi-weekly to compare company information
- Co-fund Talent Enhancement position with Ann Arbor SPARK
- Developed Start Your Own Business Boot Camp
- Provide weekly Talent Blasts for open technology and life science firms

### **Responsibilities (Individuals/organizations)**

- Trena Rusher, Washtenaw County **etcs**. Provides project oversight, direction and facilitates meetings
- Martha Welsh, M3 Strategies (consultant). Responsible for meeting planning, tracking of projects, and cross-partnership communications.
- Amy Cell, SPARK/**etcs**. Talent Blasts, Boot Camp

### **Status**

- Expanded definition to include entrepreneurs
- Co-locating **etcs** Corporate Services and SPARK staff
- Summer and fall Boot Camps scheduled
- Developing industry-focused networks

## 2. Assess/Update the Status of the Local Workforce and Economy

Washtenaw County's local workforce and economy are undergoing a major transition. In January 2007 Pfizer announced the closing of its Global Research and Development Facility which is the largest private employer in Ann Arbor with approximately 2,200 direct and 1,000 contract employees.

### Key Partners

- MEGA-Partners
- Cities of Ann Arbor and Saline
- Chelsea Community Hospital

### Strategies/Activities

- Conduct a Community Talent Survey. This non-scientific survey was designed to gather information from regional residents about their plans related to employment, education and training and starting a business.
- A study conducted by University of Michigan economists on the impact of Pfizer's closing on the community.
- In concert with SEMWAC, Washtenaw County gathered data about its workforce and economy for the broader SE Michigan region.
- Issue an RFP to conduct a labor assessment that takes into account a 50 mile commuting radius.

### Responsibilities (Individuals/organizations)

- Martha Welsh, M3 Strategies (consultant), Andy Brush (County), Amy Cell (Ann Arbor SPARK), Wes Hufstetter (UM) and Jesse Bernstein (AA Chamber). Responsible for preparing the Community Talent Survey, compiling results and public outreach.
- Ann Arbor News and UM conducted the post Pfizer study.
- Trena Rusher and Jenny Bivens (**etcs**) coordinated with SEMWAC on the regional study.
- Jenny Bivens (**etcs**), Martha Welsh (M3), Donna Shirrilla (SPARK) and Linda Hammond (Washtenaw Community College), prepared and issued the RFP, review and selection process.

### Status

- Data from Talent Survey being analyzed
- SEMWAC data received and question asked of consultant
- Vendor selected and negotiations in process for Labor Assessment

### **3. Develop a Coordinated, Regionally Based and Managed Rapid-Response Process to Address Plant Closings and Mass Lay-Offs**

Washtenaw County's economy, like the rest of Michigan, is in transition. Many former Ford, Visteon and ACH employees live in the county. A number of firms have closed or given their WARN notices.

#### **Key Partners**

- MEGA-Partners

#### **Strategies/Activities**

- Use a coordinated approach to plant closings and lay-offs
- Develop Career Change Boot Camps for people in transition
- Developed Pfizer SWOT approach and Talent Team to respond to Pfizer closing
- Conduct partner training on services and assistance
- Work with all partners to rapidly move people into employment by holding targeted career fairs, conducting employer specific recruitment and screening and hosting networking events
- Foster and support the development of new companies

#### **Responsibilities (individuals/organizations)**

- Trenda Rusher and Jenny Bivens (**etcs**), Kevin Bulifant (Michigan Works!) respond to WARN notices
- Linda Hammond (Washtenaw Community College), Sara Kersey-Otto (EMU), Kevin Bulifant (MWA), Amy Cell (SPARK) and Martha Welsh (M3) – Plan and coordinate the Career Change Boot Camps.
- Trenda Rusher (**etcs**) and Ken Nisbet (UM) co-chaired the Pfizer SWOT Talent team.
- Amy Cell (SPARK) and Kevin Bulifant (MWA) coordinate recruitment, career fairs etc.

#### **Status Notes**

- Six Career Change Boot Camps have been held to date with more scheduled for the summer and fall.
- The Pfizer SWOT Talent Team has merged with MEGA-Partnership.
- **etcs** Corporate Services, SPARK and UM working on transitioning people from Pfizer into positions in Michigan either in existing firms or as part of start-ups.
- Secured \$1 million in SAG funds to assist with Pfizer dislocation.

#### **4. Incorporate a Lay-Off Aversion Component with the Intent of Minimizing Plant Closings and Lay-Offs**

The county's chambers of commerce, SPARK and the MWA plan to develop and implement a lay-off aversion strategy targeted at firms in jeopardy. The development of this workforce and economic development process will utilize both the existing state programs and assistance, such as the MMTC. It will include a coordinated approach for identifying firms in jeopardy as early as possible and to provide them with a range of services including workforce training.

##### **Key Partners**

- MEGA-Partners

##### **Strategies/Activities**

- Use a coordinated approach to plant closings and lay-offs
- Work with Partners and MMTC on interventions

##### **Responsibilities (individuals/organizations)**

- Trenda Rusher and Jenny Bivens (**etcs**), Kevin Bulifant (Michigan Works!) respond to WARN notices
- Jesse Bernstein and Keith Peters (Chambers), Linda Hammond (Washtenaw Community College), Kevin Bulifant (MWA), Amy Cell (SPARK) and Karen Lee (MEDC)– Alert to companies in trouble and develop assistance

##### **Status Notes**

- One Washtenaw County manufacturing firm is working with the MMTC as part of Striving to Thriving.
- Working with one company that declared bankruptcy on assistance package.



## 5. Develop, Attract, and Retain Talent to Build and Support the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Economy

Washtenaw County currently has a labor shortage in many specialized and knowledge economy jobs. Toyota and Hyundai/Kia are in the process of hiring hundreds of engineers and specialized technicians. As part of this effort the MWA and SPARK will be jointly hiring a Talent Recruitment Manager. With the presence of UM and EMU in the County, part of the communications strategy will be to work with these institutions to make graduating students aware of such opportunities.

### Key Partners

- MEGA-Partners

### Strategies/Activities

- Develop a multi-pronged strategy to develop and launch new companies.
- Conduct a Talent recruitment strategy with college and university alumni organizations and major employers.
- Participate in the Healthcare and Hospitality/Tourism RSAs
- Developed Pfizer SWOT approach and Talent Team to keep as many Pfizer employees in the area.
- Develop C-level talent strategies
- Develop Health Care Middle College

### Responsibilities (individuals/organizations)

- Mike Finney (SPARK), Tenda Rusher (**etcs**), Ken Nisbet (UM Tech Transfer) and Rick Snyder (Ardesta) - Leads on new company starts
- Jesse Bernstein (AA Area Chamber), Amy Cell (SPARK) and Martha Welsh (M3) – Leads on alumni/company talent recruitment.
- Tenda Rusher and Jenny Bivens (**etcs**), SEMCA, and Kevin Bulifant (MWA)- Leads on RSAs.
- Rick Snyder (Ardesta), Ken Nisbett (UM), Tenda Rusher (**etcs**), Amy Cell (SPARK) and Martha Welsh (M3) - Leads on C-level talent strategies.
- Bill Miller (Washtenaw ISD), Keith Peters (WDB and Ypsilanti Area Chamber), John Fallon (EMU) and Tenda Rusher (**etcs**) - Leads on Health Care Middle College.

### Status Notes

- Multiple Entrepreneur Boot Camps held and support system provided. Wet Lab incubator formed with assistance from UM and Pfizer.
- Meetings with alumni and companies in progress.
- RSAs are in process.
- Strategies and proposals in development to attract C-level talent.
- Funds received from Michigan Dept of Education for Health Care Middle College.

## **6. Develop And Implement A Communications Strategy Targeted At Partners, Employers And The General Public.**

The consultants will develop and assist with the implementation of a communications strategy targeted at partners, employers and the public. This includes development of a strategic communications plan with key messages, target audiences, methods, timeline and outcomes.

### **Key Partners**

- MEGA-Partners

### **Strategies/Activities**

- Develop and implement a communications strategy and plan
- Work with partners to develop common messages
- Develop a Community Talent Survey for the public

### **Responsibilities (individuals/organizations)**

- Maura Campbell (M3) and Elizabeth Parkinson (SPARK) – Leads in Coordinated communications strategy and implementation
- Trena Rusher (**etcs**), Jesse Bernstein (AA Chamber) and Martha Welsh (M3) – Leads in communication about Talent Survey

### **Status Notes**

- Developed Communications strategy.
- Formed Communications team.
- Multiple articles and interviews in the media.

### Relationship to Regional WIRED Initiative

As part of the Southeast Michigan Works! Agency Coalition (SEMWAC), the Washtenaw County MWA is a partner with the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce and its WIRED project. Trena Rusher sits on its Board of Directors.

### Proposed Measures

Measure	Tracking
To create a unified local approach to working with employers we will develop a unified approach to call on employers and provide a "one-knock" solution.	Completed process for unified approach with the partners.
To assess/update the state of the local workforce and economy we will develop a resource map.	Development of the SHARE resource project plan.
To develop a coordinated, regionally-based and managed response to address plant closing and mass lay-offs.	Development of a skills road map and project plan to develop training.
To incorporate a lay-off aversion component by working with partners to identify and assist firms.	Development of a process to assist firms with partners.
To develop, attract and retain talent to build and support the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century economy, we will hire a Talent Recruitment Manager.	Hiring of Talent Recruitment Manager
To develop and implement a communications strategy, we will develop and begin implementation of a communications plan	Complete development of the communications plan.

### Technical Assistance Needs

The Washtenaw MWA is not requesting any technical assistance from the State at this time.

### Budget Narrative

The total cost of the project is \$50,000. The funds will be used to retain M3 Strategies LLC as the project manager and to develop the communications strategy.

## Project Timeline

	Task	July '06	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan '07	Feb	Mar	April	May	June
1.	Select Consultant												
2.	Convene MEGA-Partners (pre-dates)												
<b>3. Create a Uniform Approach to Working with Employers</b>													
	Conduct Cross-Training/mapping												
	Contact Tracking (in conjunction with SPARK)												
	Hire Talent Enhancement Director												
	Start Your Own Business Boot Camps												
	Provide Talent Blasts												
<b>4. Assess/Update the Status of the Local Workforce and Economy</b>													
	Conduct a Community Talent Survey												
	Post Pfizer UM study												
	SEMWAC study												
	Labor Assessment RFP												
	Review and Analysis												
<b>5. Develop a Coordinated, Regionally Based and Managed Rapid-Response Process to Address Plant Closings and Mass Lay-Offs</b>													
	Use a coordinated approach to plant closings and lay-offs												
	Develop Career Change Boot Camps for people in transition												
	Developed Pfizer SWOT approach and Talent Team to respond to Pfizer closing												
	Conduct partner training on services and assistance												
	Work with all partners rapidly move people into employment by holding targeted career fairs, conducting employer specific recruitment and screening and hosting networking events												
	Foster and support the development of new companies												

<b>6. To incorporate a lay-off aversion component by working with partners to identify and assist firms.</b>													
	Meet regularly to exchange information												
	Work with firms												
<b>7. To develop, attract and retain talent to build and support the 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy.</b>													
	Develop a multi-pronged strategy to develop and launch new companies.												
	Conduct a talent recruitment strategy with area companies and university alumni associations												
	Participate in Healthcare and Hospitality and Tourism RSA												
	Develop C-level Talent Strategies												
	Develop Healthcare Middle College												
<b>8. To develop and implement a communications strategy, we will develop and begin implementation of a communications plan</b>													
	Develop and implement a Communications Strategy												
	Work with partners to develop common messages												
	Develop a Community Talent Survey												